

Park Hill Meeting House
Park Hill (on State Route 63, in
Town of Westmoreland)
Cheshire County
New Hampshire

HABS No. NH-57

HABS
N.H.
3-PARK
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

PARK HILL MEETING HOUSE

HABS
N.H.
3-PARK
1-

Location: Park Hill (on State Route 63, in Town of Westmoreland), Cheshire County, New Hampshire.

Present Owner: Congregational Society of Park Hill.

Present Occupants: The owners.

Present Use: Meeting House; used only during three summer months, by the Congregation using the Westmoreland Church in the winter.

Brief Statement of Significance: This building is one of the larger, more elaborate and imposing meeting houses of the area.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection and architect: The original meeting house was built in 1762 and was similar to the Rockingham, Vermont, meeting house seventeen miles away. The original structure was moved to the present site in 1779. The present tower and facade were designed by Steward Estey either in 1826 when the bell was installed, or in 1824 (Federal Writers' Project, New Hampshire. . ., p. 94).
2. Notes on alterations and additions: Originally the church had one large room, and the over-all size was 50' x 40'. In 1826, 20' added to front of the building. In 1853 a floor was added through the middle, with church upstairs and meeting rooms on ground floor. Little of the original interior remains. The exterior, however, is as of 1826.

B. References

1. Federal Writers' Project, New Hampshire; A Guide to the Granite State (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1938), pages 94, 359.
2. Kenneth Clark, two drawings in the White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs, XI, No. 5 (1925).

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated

HABS No. NH-57

PARK HILL MEETING HOUSE

Page 2

1. Rev. I. S. Knowlan, minister of the Church, has ms. copy of records of the church from 1764 to 1844. He also has the diary of Deacon Otis Hutchins, 1823-31.
2. See also History of Cheshire County, 1886.

Prepared by Dr. Frank J. Roos, Jr.,
University of Illinois, for National
Park Service, 143 South Third Street,
Philadelphia 6, Pa. - July 1959.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Interest and Merit: One of the outstanding meeting houses along the Vermont, New Hampshire line. This meeting house has undergone typical alterations having been moved and enlarged, and particularly in the addition of an intermediate floor in 1853 dividing the building into upper and lower levels. The facade and tower added in 1824 or 1826 are notable for their size and detail.
2. Condition of Fabric: Excellent.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: 40' x 70' - two stories.
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Wall construction: Frame, wood pegs and mortised beams. Clapboard. Beams in attic c. 8" x 8".
4. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: Three doors on facade, 1853, panelled.
 - b. Windows and shutters: 12 x 12 double hung. Louvered shutters on sides.

PARK HILL MEETING HOUSE
Page 3

5. Roof: Gable roof, slate covering.
6. Tower: Three stages - two square stages, lower one with Palladian window, second stage open; third octagonal stage surmounted by a dome. Original weather-vane. Paul Revere bell cracked and later recast.
7. Portico and facade: Two story projecting portico with pediment; supported by paired Doric columns at the corners; vertical ovoid window in pediment flanked by carved branches in high relief; Doric entablature with small architrave; columns on granite pedestals. Portico columns matched by paired, flat pilasters at the facade which are also repeated at the corners of the building.
8. Chimneys: Two chimney columns. Not now heated, but early furnaces in chimney column still present, of metal.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor Plan: Interior porch with two stairways, one on either side mounting to church (second) floor. 1853 detail.
2. Floor: regular width pine boards, 1853.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: 1853 and some within last ten years.
4. Doorways and doors: 1853.
5. Trim: Dado in main meeting room, 3' high.
6. Hardware: None original.
7. Lighting: Electric.
8. Heating: Not heated. Used only three months a year. Congregation uses church in Westmoreland in winter.

D. Site

1. Orientation and General Setting: Faces South - on hill overlooking small green with seven houses. View of Connecticut Valley.

NH

3 PARK

HABS No. NH-57

PARK HILL MEETING HOUSE
Page 4

2. Outbuildings: Had horse sheds on west side, since removed.
3. Walks: Granite flag stone steps. No walks.
4. Landscaping: None, except lawn.

Prepared by Dr. Frank J. Roos, Jr.,
University of Illinois, for National
Park Service, 143 South Third Street,
Philadelphia 6, Pa. - July 1959.